

REMARKS

Applicants thank Mr. Nathan L. Laughlin for his courtesies extended to applicants' representative during the Telephonic Interview conducted on May 11, 2011, and for his assistance in furthering prosecution on the merits of the instant application. During the Telephonic Interview, the rejection of independent claim 1 in view of the cited art was discussed. No agreement with respect to patentability of the claims was reached. The following amendments and remarks take into account the content of the Telephonic Interview.

Claims 1, 3-7, 9-16, 18, 21-28, and 30-38 are pending in this application, with claims 1, 7, 13, and 28 being in independent form. Claims 1, 4, 7, 9, 13, 16, 18, 28, 34, 36 and 37 have been amended. The amendments to claims 9, 18, 34, 36 and 37 correct minor claim wording. No new matter has been added. Reconsideration of the above-identified application, as herein amended and in view of the following remarks, is respectfully requested.

Claims 4 and 16 have been objected to based on a minor informality. According to the Examiner, "claims 4 and 16 contain acronyms that are not defined in the claims". In response to this objection, applicants have amended claims 4 and 16 in a self-explanatory manner. Withdrawal of the objection is thus deemed to be in order.

Claims 1, 3-7, 9-18, 21-28 and 30-38 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Pub. No 2003/0122679 ("Matsushima") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,801,634 ("Young"), and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,697,695 ("Kurihara"). For the following reasons, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection is requested.

Independent claim 1 has been amended to clarify the salient aspects of the claimed invention. Thus, independent claim 1 now recites, *inter alia*, “a plurality of spatially distributed production units, each production unit comprising means for generating and indicating fault signals, each production unit being associated with a transmitting unit configured to wirelessly transmit the fault signals, two or more of said plurality of spatially distributed production units being arranged to form a plurality of groups of the two or more spatially distributed production units” and “a plurality of spatially distributed stationary data receiving units configured to transmit the fault signals to the fault alarm box, each of the plurality of spatially distributed stationary data receiving units comprising a lamp, each of the plurality of spatially distributed stationary data receiving units being configured to wirelessly receive the fault signals from one of the plurality of groups of the two or more spatially distributed production units and to indicate the fault signals, the lamp being configured to visually display the fault signals”.

Independent claim 13 has been amended to clarify the corresponding limitations, and independent claims 7 and 28 have each been amended to recite a corresponding method step with clarified similar limitations. As described in more detail below, the combination of the cited art fails to teach or suggest the above limitations because the fabrication apparatuses of Matsushima are not each arranged into a plurality of groups of two or more production units, where a respective one of the plurality of groups of the two or more production units is associated with a respective one of a plurality of spatially distributed stationary data receiving units.

The Examiner (at pg. 3 of the Office Action) asserts that:

Matsushima teaches ... a plurality of stationary data receiving unit configured for transmitting the fault signals to the fault alarm box (fig. 3 element 32), each of the receiving units comprising a lamp (element 20) each of a plurality of stationary data receiving units being configured to receive the fault signals from the one of

the plurality of groups of production units and to indicate the fault signals (fig. 2).... (Emphasis Added)

Applicants disagree.

Matsushima relates to a plurality of fabrication apparatuses 12 arranged in series for performing a sequential processing of work units applied to a system. That is, *Matsushima* discloses a fabrication apparatus that includes special equipment interconnected by a wired "backbone".

Under the Examiner proffered analysis, the lamp control signal monitor 32 is associated with applicants' claimed stationary data receiving unit, as shown in Fig. 3 of *Matsushima*. The Examiner (at pg. 10; *Response to Remarks*) additionally asserts that the fabrication unit 12 includes "a receiving unit (element 32) that transmits a signal to the PC via element 44", while now asserting that the same element 32 corresponds to the stationary data receiving unit recited in the claims. Applicants disagree with the Examiner-proffered construct of the *Matsushima* apparatus.

Paragraph [0029] of *Matsushima* explains that the lamp control signal monitor 32 is included in the fabrication apparatus 12, and that "[t]he lamp control signal monitor 32 is directly concerned with the present invention". *Matsushima* (paragraph [0032], lines 1-4) further explains that "[t]he lamp control signals, outputted from the controller 28, are also applied to the lamp control signal monitor 32, which comprises a parallel interface 42, a serial interface 44, a microprocessor unit (MPU) 46, and a memory 48". *Matsushima* (paragraph [0032], lines 4-13) additionally explains that "[t]he lamp control signal monitor 32 is operatively coupled to the display 22, a display control switch 50, and the personal computer 52. The computer 52 serves to load suitable software to the CPU 46, and applies date-and-time information to the MPU 46, and collecting the data stored in the memory 48. Further, the computer 52 is coupled to a

plurality of lamp control signal monitors of the other fabrication apparatuses (not shown in FIG. 3 but best shown in FIG. 4)".

Matsushima clearly explains that the receiving unit 32 (i.e., lamp control signal monitor) depicted in Fig. 3 forms part of the fabrication apparatus 12. That is, the lamp control signal monitor is internal to the fabrication apparatus 12. It thus follows that there is no "plurality of spatially distributed stationary data receiving units configured to transmit the fault signals to the fault alarm box" in the *Matsushima* apparatus.

In contrast, applicants claimed invention includes a plurality of spatially distributed stationary data receiving units configured to transmit the fault signals to the fault alarm box, each of the plurality of spatially distributed stationary data receiving units comprising a lamp, each of the plurality of spatially distributed stationary data receiving units being configured to wirelessly receive the fault signals from a plurality of groups of two or more production units and to indicate the fault signals, the lamp being configured to visually display the fault signals", as recited in now amended independent claim 1. Independent claim 1 additionally recites "a plurality of spatially distributed production units, each production unit comprising means for generating and indicating fault signals, each production unit being associated with a transmitting unit configured to wirelessly transmit the fault signals, two or more of said plurality of spatially distributed production units being arranged to form a plurality of groups of the two or more spatially distributed production units". That is, in accordance with the claimed invention, production units are arranged into a plurality of groups of two or more production units. In addition, a plurality of spatially distributed stationary data receiving units are provided, where each stationary data receiving unit is dedicated to exactly one of the groups of two or more production units. Consequently, it is possible for one stationary data receiving unit to show

faults of several production units within its respective group, where the production units are members of the same group. Faults of other production units, which are members of another or second group, however, are signaled to another or a second stationary data receiving unit.

The fabrication apparatuses of *Matsushima* are arranged into a plurality of fabrication apparatuses, where each group of fabrication apparatuses is provided with a lamp control signal monitor. In all cases, however, *Matsushima* depicts a single group of fabrication apparatuses. There is no duplication of this single group of apparatuses to provide a plurality of the groups of apparatuses. Accordingly, there is no teaching or suggestion in *Matsushima* of "two or more of said plurality of spatially distributed production units being arranged to form a plurality of groups of two or more spatially distributed production units" and "a respective one of the plurality of groups of the two or more spatially distributed production units being associated with a respective one of the plurality of spatially distributed stationary data receiving units", as recited in independent claim 1. Independent claim 13 recites "a plurality of groups comprising a number of said plurality of production units, each respective one of the plurality of groups being associated with a respective one of the plurality of spatially distributed stationary data receiving units configured to wirelessly receive fault signals transmitted by the transmitting unit associated with any production unit in said respective group". Independent claims 7 and 28 recite a corresponding method step. There is no teaching or suggestion in *Matsushima* of these limitations.

Young has been cited to provide a teaching "that the monitoring controller can be separate and include a light tower". *Kurihara* has been cited to provide a teaching that "a group of multiple units can be monitored by a single monitor". *Young* relates to "a monitoring system that permits the early detection of an error condition that most probably will result in a batch of

wafers that are out of specification and must be scrapped" (see col. 2, lines 21-24). *Kurihara* relates to "a laser device management system wherein data indicating the state of the laser device is acquired by gathering data at predetermined events, thereby allowing it to predict the lifetime of consumable components and predict problems with the laser device before they occur, from a remote location" (see col. 2, lines 35-40).

However, *Young* and *Kurihara* are silent with respect to two or more production units arranged to form a plurality of groups of the two or more production units, where a respective one of the plurality of groups of the two or more production units is associated with a respective one of the plurality of spatially distributed stationary data receiving units. Accordingly, the combination of *Matsushima*, *Young* and *Kurihara* fails to achieve the expressly recited subject matter of independent claims 1, 7, 13 and 28, because *Young* and *Kurihara* fails to provide what *Matsushima* lacks.

In view of the foregoing, independent claim 1, 7, 13 and 28 are patentable over *Matsushima*, *Young* and *Kurihara*, individually or in combination. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under §103(a) are therefore in order, and a notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

In view of the patentability of independent claims 1, 7, 13 and 28, dependent claims 3-6, 9-12, 14-16, 18, 21-27 and 30-38 are also patentable over the prior art for the reasons set forth above, as well as for the additional recitations contained therein.

Based on the foregoing remarks, this application is in condition for allowance. Early passage of this case to issue is respectfully requested.

Should the Examiner have any comments, questions, suggestions, or objections, the Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned in order to facilitate reaching a resolution of any outstanding issues.

It is believed that no fees or charges are required at this time in connection with the present application. However, if any fees or charges are required at this time, they may be charged to our Patent and Trademark Office Deposit Account No. 03-2412.

Respectfully submitted,
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